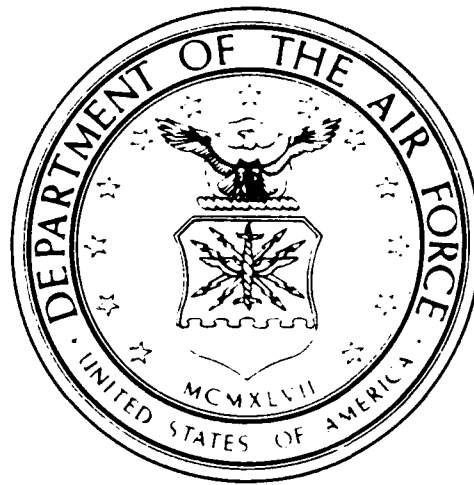


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# CLIC PAPERS

LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT  
OVERVIEW, DEFINITIONS, AND  
POLICY CONCERNS

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Army - Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict  
Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

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**LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**  
**OVERVIEW, DEFINITIONS, AND POLICY CONCERNS**

by

Howard Lee Dixon, Colonel, USAF



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**June 1989**

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## **THE ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

The mission of the Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict (A-AF CLIC) is to improve the Army and Air Force posture for engaging in low intensity conflict (LIC), elevate awareness throughout the Army and Air Force of the role of the military instrument of national power in low intensity conflict, including the capabilities needed to realize that role, and provide an infrastructure for eventual transition to a joint and, perhaps, interagency activity.

## **CLIC PAPERS**

CLIC PAPERS are informal, occasional publications sponsored by the Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict. They are dedicated to the advancement of the art and science of the application of the military instrument of national power in the low intensity conflict environment. All military members and civilian Defense Department employees are invited to contribute original, unclassified manuscripts for publication as CLIC PAPERS. Topics can include any aspect of military involvement in low intensity conflict to include history, doctrine, strategy, or operations. Papers should be as brief and concise as possible. Interested authors should submit double-spaced typed manuscripts along with a brief, one-page abstract to the Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict, Langley AFB, VA 23665-5556.

## PREVIOUS CLIC PAPERS

Previous CLIC PAPERS are available in most major military libraries. Copies can be obtained from the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), Defense Logistics Agency, Cameron Station, Alexandria, VA 22304-6145, telephone (202) 274-6434 or AUTOVON 284-6434 or through your local DTIC account representative. Copies can also be obtained from the Defense Logistics Studies Information Exchange (DLSIE), US Army Logistics Management College, Ft Lee, VA 23803-6043, telephone (804) 734-4255 or AUTOVON 687-4255. These papers together with their DTIC and DLSIE reference number are listed below.

<u>DTIC AD#</u>	<u>DLSIE LD#</u>	<u>SHORT TITLE</u>
A185 972	073892A	Operational Considerations in LIC
A185 973	073893A	Logistical Considerations in LIC
A185 974	073894A	Security Assistance and LIC: A Challenge to Excellence
A185 975	073896A	The Role of Reserve Forces in LIC
A185 976	073895A	Compilation of LIC References and Bibliography, Vol I
A185 977	073897A	Army Medical Department Roles and Functions in LIC
A185 978	073899A	Operational Art in LIC
A186 280	073898A	LIC Imperatives for Success
A193 702		Logistic Support for LIC An Air Force Perspective
A193 703		Framework for Competitive Strategies Development in LIC
A193 704		US Armed Forces Public Affairs Roles in LIC
A193 705		LIC Education and Training Within the DoD
A193 706		Planning for Combat Employment of Air Power in PCOs
A198 670		Modern Terrorism: Potential for Increased Lethality
A198 668		Aid to Democratic States Facing Revolutionary Warfare
A198 669		Technology Guidelines and Military Applications in LIC
A199 026		Introduction to Understanding Latin Americans
A203 707		The Literature of Low-Intensity Conflict
A205 055		US Military Civic Action in Honduras, 1982-1985
A205 084		Compilation of LIC References and Bibliography, Vol II
A205 086		Psychological Strategies in LIC
		Arms Transfers and the Third World
		LIC Policy and Strategy Statements
		Reserve Component Support to LIC Strategy
		Peacekeeping Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
		Security Assistance Example, African Coastal Security Program
		A Theater Approach to Low Intensity Conflict
		Liberation Theology, Two Views

## PREFACE

This paper is an edited version of a briefing given by Colonel Lee Dixon, A-AF Center for Low Intensity Conflict Reserve Component Advisor, on 12 May 1989 at a symposium on "Low Intensity Conflict: Does America Have A Choice?" held at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN. The symposium was sponsored by the National Strategy Information Center, the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, the Army-Navy-Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Minnesota, the Air Force Association, and the Association of the United States Army. The purpose of the symposium was to explore United States options regarding insurgencies, supporting nations facing external aggression, peacekeeping, and counterterrorism operations.

The conference was organized to provide an information baseline to balance the liberal perspectives often present in academic environments. The importance of the conference at the University of Minnesota and similar conferences is underscored by the prevalence of a liberal point of view which believes America's foreign policies is detrimental to the people of the Third World. In this vein, the low intensity conflict detractors often use the term "A War on the Poor" to describe United States efforts in the Third World. In the past, there has been no predisposed domestic constituency for America's LIC policies. Conferences such as the one at the University of Minnesota address this specific point, but more must be done. We must continue to enhance sensitivities within government, the media, and the public for clear, unbiased information regarding the threats to United States interests and the development of effective policies to meet these threats.

**Low Intensity Conflict**  
**Overview, Definitions, and Policy Concerns**

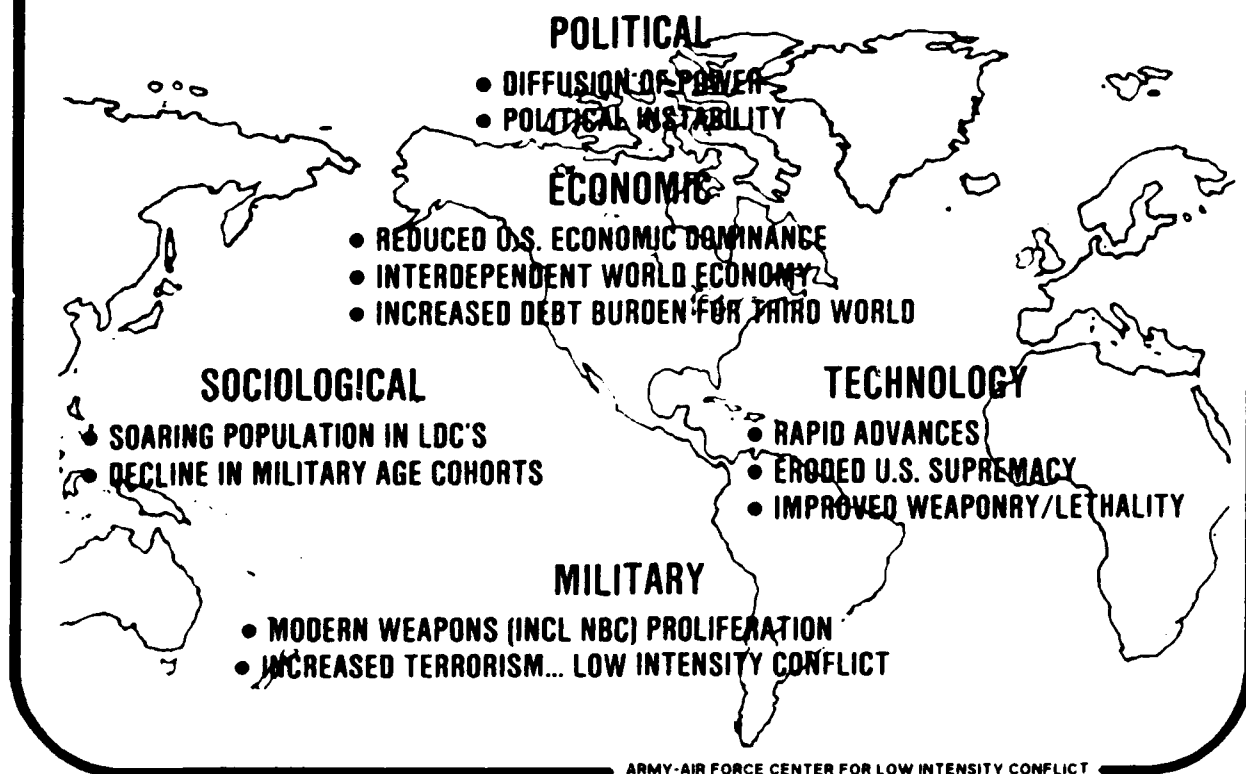
**OVERVIEW**

- **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**
- **LEGISLATION AND POLICY DOCUMENTS OF THE 1980s**
- **CONCERNS OF THE CENTER**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

Good morning, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this forum and commend the co-sponsors for convening a conference which addresses one of the most pressing problems in US foreign and defense policy today. I have been asked to provide some basic information about low intensity conflict to include an overview, definitions and policy concerns. I'll attempt this "one-over-the-world" coverage using this as my basic outline. You might think of it as an intelligence preparation of the battlefield for the remainder of our conference today.

# THE FUTURE ENVIRONMENT



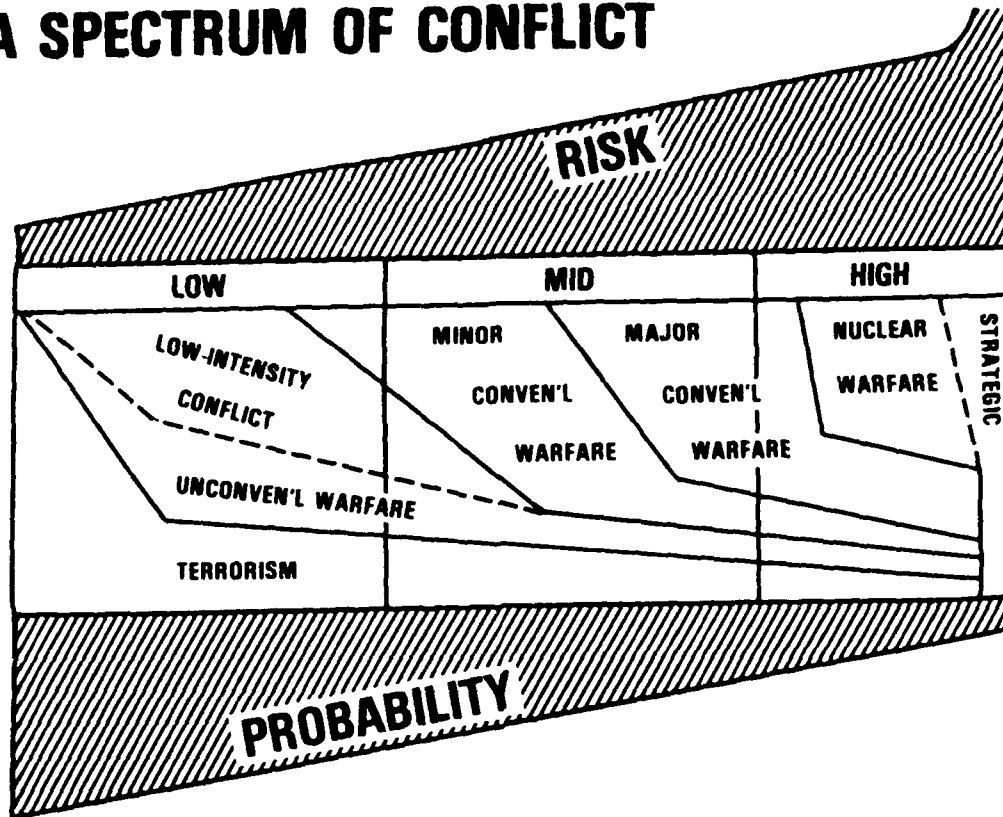
Meeting the challenge of low intensity conflict requires us to confront a host of political, military, economic, and informational problems. Lay on top of that such uncertainties as the intellectual, legal, and moral questions raised by some individuals, and you begin to understand the complex nature of low intensity conflict. Unfortunately, the future environment will make low intensity conflict even more complex and probably the prevalent form of warfare for the foreseeable future. One point to be made is that of perspective. Low intensity conflict is only low from the perspective of the United States. To the people facing civil war and terrorism in Lebanon each day, it is anything but low. To the individuals involved in the heroic struggles for freedom in Afghanistan, or Nicaragua, or Angola, it is not low intensity. Even to the Americans and their families held hostage in Lebanon or who lost their lives on Pan American Flight 103, it is not low intensity conflict.



The irony is that these challenges have grown in recent years partly because of our success in deterring nuclear and conventional war. People who oppose us and what we stand for know they cannot prevail in that type of war. So they turned to another battlefield and other methods in an effort to win the hearts and minds of forgotten people. In the military, we would refer to this as a flanking maneuver. They believe the legal and moral complexities prevalent on the low intensity conflict battlefield will entangle us in our own scruples and exploit human inhibitions against applying force to defend our interests.

I would like to begin our discussion with a historical review of US military doctrine as it applies to low intensity conflict. Within our organization, we think a close review of history pays important benefits. It helps us to avoid mistakes of the past and enhances our capability to address the challenges of the future. We even have a professional historian at the Army-Air Force Center for Low intensity Conflict to assist in that regard. A portion of this presentation is based upon his work and that of LTC Jerry Thompson of the US Army Low Intensity Conflict Proponency Office at Ft Leavenworth who made a similar presentation at New York University last year.

## A SPECTRUM OF CONFLICT



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The historical roots of the term low intensity conflict, which obviously implies the existence of other levels of conflict, goes back at least to the 1950s. In a RAND study, Dr Kenneth Solomon credits Sir F. Reginald Farmer for the first development of risk and probability curves associated with risk-safety and nuclear reactors. His work soon spread to strategic nuclear strategy and eventually to a conflict spectrum (low, mid, and high level conflicts). Here is a variation of that spectrum.

## UNITED STATES REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

- AMERICA'S HOPES LIE NOT IN MILITARY VICTORY BUT POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN BRITAIN
- PERSISTENT ACTION AGAINST THE PERIPHERY OF THE BRITISH FORCES TO WEAR AWAY THEIR RESOLUTION
- AT YORKTOWN, AMERICA FACED NOT THE MAIN BRITISH ARMY BUT A WEAKENED PORTION OF THEIR SOUTHERN ARMY

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If we discard the semantics of "low intensity," we can go back to one of this nation's earliest experiences with conflict which was the Revolutionary War. As Russell Weigley observes in his book American Way of War, ". . . Washington's hopes had to lie mainly not in military victory but in the possibility that the political opposition in Great Britain might in time force the British ministry to abandon the conflict," and ". . . to wear away the resolution of the British by gradual, persistent action against the periphery of their armies was as much of an offensive purpose as Washington could afford." What Weigley calls the "strategy of attrition" worked, and "at Yorktown, Washington faced not the main British army in America but a weakened portion of their southern army, and he did so with French assistance by land and by sea which itself was strong enough to have overwhelmed Charles Lord Cornwallis." With the exception of fighting the Seminole Indians in the Florida swamps and the Mexican War of 1847, the United States' experience up to the Civil War reinforced our developing national traditions about war. War, to the Americans, was a problem essentially of mobilization for the destruction of an enemy's forces by a predominantly citizen army and then a return to peace in as short a time as possible.

## **UNITED STATES CIVIL WAR AND LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

- **MOBILIZATION ON BOTH SIDES MADE  
DECISIVE VICTORY ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE**
- **A MOVE AWAY FROM THE NAPOLEONIC BATTLES  
TO THE MASS NATIONAL WARS OF  
THE 20TH CENTURY**
- **THE TURNING POINT ON WHICH THE AMERICAN  
WAR PARADIGM CAME TO BE BUILT**

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The Civil War put a slightly different spin on this developing tradition. In this war, mobilization became so effective that decisive victory was impossible. What had to occur was the wearing away, the destruction or the complete dislocation of the enemy's ability to sustain war. This lesson was not clearly recognized at the time by Americans or Europeans, and it was not to be fully appreciated until the World Wars of the Twentieth Century. It was a move away from the Napoleonic focus on the decisive battle to the mass national industrial wars of the Twentieth Century.

## **TRADITIONAL CONFLICT PARADIGM**

- **A RELIANCE ON CORRELATION OF FORCES, FIREPOWER, AND CONVENTIONAL TACTICS**
- **A FAITH IN TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS AND QUANTIFICATIONS**
- **REQUIREMENT FOR AN EMINENT CAUSE PRIOR TO U.S. INVOLVEMENT**
- **A BELIEF THAT WAR SUSPENDS POLITICS**

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What this has to do with low intensity conflict is that the Civil War became the turning point upon which the American war paradigm came to be built. As described by one writer, this paradigm includes, "A belief in the value of firepower; a faith in quantification; a tendency to prefer the use of firepower over the direct commitment of soldiers; a belief in the need for an eminent cause for US involvement; a belief that war suspends politics; an emphasis on conventional tactics; a belief that political cognizance undermines combat efficiency; a tendency to concentrate on the 'big war'; a faith in technological solutions; and a belief in the value of offensive operations." One might add, up through the end of the Vietnam War, the belief was that this paradigm applied to all forms of war in all environments. At the Army-Air Force Center for Low intensity Conflict, we call this the traditional conflict paradigm.

The period of the Indian Wars, following the Civil War, established the patterns for how America would deal with its "lesser conflicts" until World War I, in other words, ad hoc, without doctrine, training, force structure, or equipment designed for these environments.

The Spanish-American War brought the United States into Cuba and the Philippines. They were two dissimilar environments with a common goal from the US perspective, summarized by the loosely-used term, "nation building." Unfortunately, we tried to make them over "in our image." Although we were not able to create a non-partisan military, the current health systems and public administration in Cuba and the thriving democratic tradition in the Philippines are examples of success.

## **WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II AND LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

- **SOLIDIFIED AND VALIDATED THE AMERICAN WAR PARADIGM**
- **WORLD WAR II INCLUDED SUPPORT TO IRREGULAR UNITS, GUERRILLAS, OR PARTISANS CODIFIED AS "UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE"**
- **AFTER WORLD WAR II INSTITUTIONALIZED SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

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World War I solidified the traditional American war paradigm in every respect, and World War II validated it. The national security legislation and national policy memoranda of the 1940s and 1950s were predicated upon this concept and literally gave it the force of law. These added a new element which might be considered part of the paradigm. This was the clear identification of the Soviet Union as the military threat. Indeed, we have designed our doctrine, force structure, and materiel specifically to defeat the Soviet armed forces. It is hard not to consider the Soviet threat as part of the American war paradigm.

Another new element, relevant to the evolution of low intensity conflict doctrine, came out of World War II. That is the experience we gained in working with and supporting irregular units, guerrillas, or partisans. The United States, working with the British, as well as on its own, developed doctrine and force structure to support this activity. As a result, we became rather proficient at it. It went by several names at the time but came to be called "unconventional warfare."



The period following World War II saw the institutionalizing of some of the special operations capabilities developed during the war and the establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency. The fall of Czechoslovakia in 1948, and the Greek struggle, which led to the Truman Doctrine, suggested that Soviet expansionism would continue.

In addition to the Greek revolt, there were several other experiences with irregular forces, for example, the Philippines and Malaya. These cases involved combatting insurgents rather than supporting the partisans as in World War II, but the same principles seemed to apply.

## **THE KOREAN WAR AND LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

- **HEIGHTENED POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT  
IN EXECUTION OF OPERATIONS**
- **U.S. FACED UNCONVENTIONAL TACTICS  
OF NORTH KOREANS AND CHINESE**

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Then came the Korean War. It added an important dimension to the American strategy on low intensity conflicts. Heightened political involvement in the execution of operations, combined with a variety of unconventional tactics by North Koreans and Chinese, suggested the landscape was changing. Regardless, employment of elite or special units during this period was considered by many as disruptive and contrary to the principles of war. Thus, what doctrine was developed was mostly for special operations rather than low intensity conflict and outside the mainstream of military thought.

**THERE IS ANOTHER TYPE OF WAR, NEW IN ITS  
INTENSITY, ANCIENT IN ITS ORIGIN -- WAR BY  
GUERRILLAS, SUBVERSIVES, INSURGENTS, ASSASSINS,  
WAR BY AMBUSH INSTEAD OF BY COMBAT. . . IT  
REQUIRES. . . WHERE WE MUST COUNTER IT . . . A  
WHOLE NEW KIND OF STRATEGY, A WHOLLY DIFFERENT  
KIND OF FORCE AND THEREFORE A NEW AND WHOLLY  
DIFFERENT KIND OF MILITARY TRAINING**

**PRESIDENT KENNEDY 1962**

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President Kennedy's national policy, based upon flexible response and counterinsurgency, was designed to cope with "wars of national liberation." Most people, when discussing conflict in this era, immediately focus on the war in Southeast Asia. Yet the early 1960s saw both air and ground special forces traveling to Africa and Latin America to help countries there build a counterinsurgency capability. In fact, Colonel Dean, one of our hosts today, has written extensively on the air aspects of these Air Force units nicknamed "Jungle Jim." One can only guess what benefits might have come to these regions if we had not become so heavily involved in Vietnam.

## **THE VIETNAM WAR AND LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

- **U.S. DOCTRINE FOCUSED ON CONVENTIONAL WAR,  
RATHER THAN COUNTERINSURGENCY**
- **THE AMERICAN WAR PARADIGM DID NOT ALLOW  
FOR A WAR WHOSE CENTRAL FEATURE  
WAS NOT COMBAT**

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Nevertheless, any serious discussion of low intensity conflict doctrine must reconcile itself with the Vietnam War. That is an entirely reasonable expectation. Unfortunately, that is often the first and last case against which the doctrine is measured, and that is entirely unreasonable and dangerous. But, since we are talking about historical evolution and we have arrived at the Vietnam War, let us see what lessons we have taken from that experience.

## **EVOLVING CONFLICT PARADIGM**

- **SELF-RESTRAINT TOWARD FIREPOWER  
ORIENTED OPERATIONS AND A PROPENSITY TO OPERATE  
WITHIN COMPLEX CONSTRAINTS**
- **AN EMPHASIS ON SIMPLICITY AND RELIABILITY**
- **A COMMITMENT TO A LONG-TERM EFFORT WITH FEW  
TIME TABLES THAT TRANSCENDS POLITICAL CHANGES**
- **A POLITICAL FOCUS ON THE NATURE OF WAR**

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There were two major flaws in doctrine as we entered Vietnam. The first was the aforementioned weakness in our counterinsurgency doctrine. The second stems from the war paradigm which I have previously discussed. That paradigm did not allow for the existence of a war whose central feature was not combat between armed forces. Consequently, the body of doctrine which was available did not address the situation at hand. In short, from the perspective of doctrine, we were in a position identical to the frontier army in the Indian Wars. In retrospect, astute development of doctrine would have focused on something like an evolving conflict paradigm as shown here.

## QUOTES FROM VIETNAM

THE NEW ADMINISTRATION (KENNEDY) WAS  
OVERSOLD ON THE IMPORTANCE OF  
GUERRILLA WARFARE.

GENERAL LYMAN LEMNITZER, USA  
CHAIRMAN JCS, 60-62

ANY GOOD SOLDIER CAN HANDLE GUERRILLAS

GENERAL GEORGE DECKER, USA  
ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, 60-62

THE ESSENCE OF THE PROBLEM IN VIETNAM  
IS MILITARY

GENERAL EARLE WHEELER, USA  
ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, 62-64

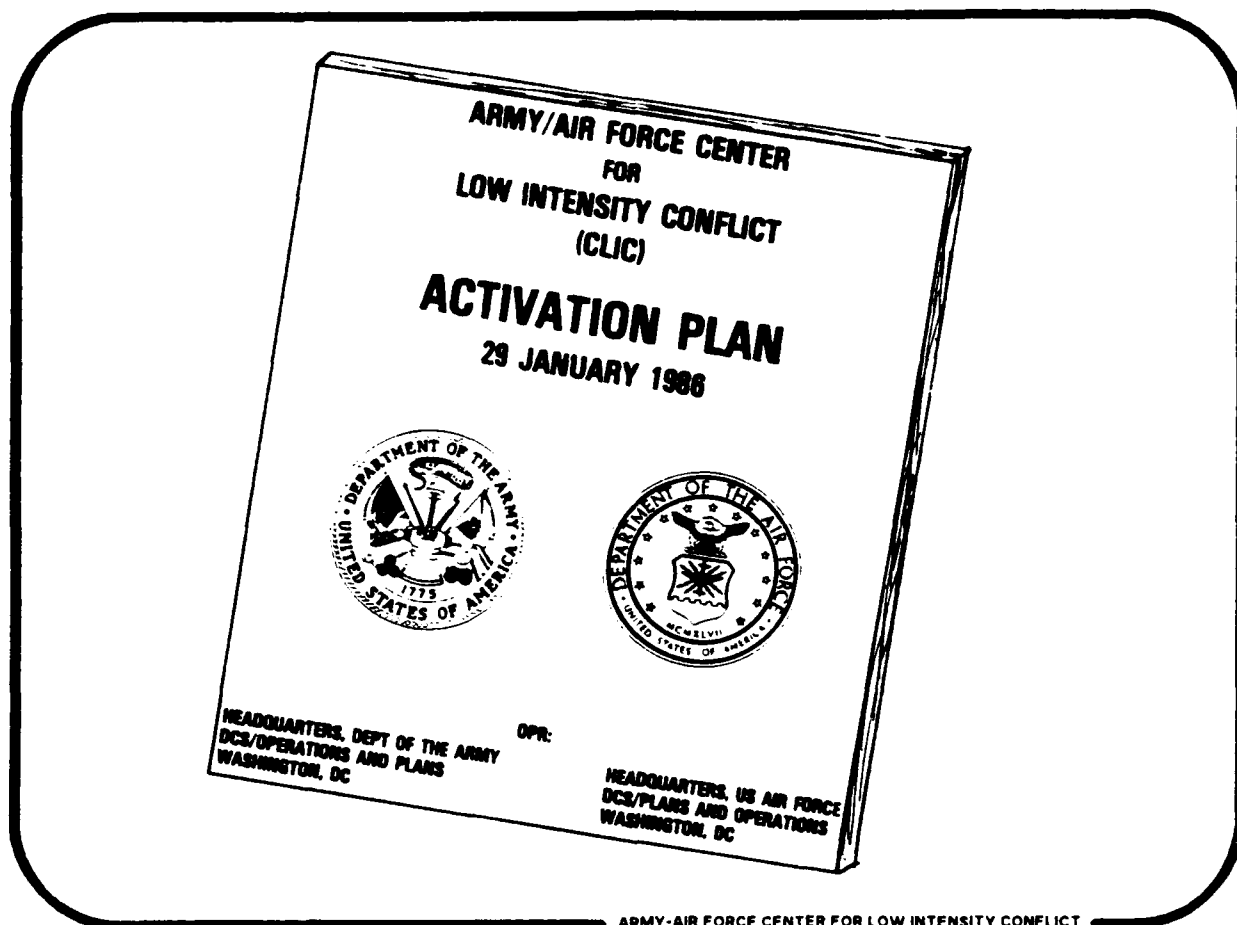
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Dr Andrew Krepinevich, in his book The Army and Vietnam, traces the impact of this second problem. He substantiates the assertion that, faced with a situation that did not fit the paradigm or the doctrine, the military Services interpreted the events in a way that made them fit the paradigm. In other words, we were not fighting the same war our enemy was. This argument is also substantiated by Douglas Pike's series on the Vietnam War.

An example of this conceptual failure is pointed out in Harry Summers' often quoted book, On Strategy. Colonel Summers tells about meeting a senior North Vietnamese officer to whom he stated the US won virtually every major battle of the war. The North Vietnamese officer replied in agreement but also pointed out that fact was totally irrelevant to the outcome of the war.

The final major lesson from Vietnam for doctrine seems to me to be the responsibility of the host government to change policies and structure to respond to the demands which produced the insurgency in the first place. The contest is for legitimacy. An external supporter can provide advice, training, material, and services, but only the host government can build its own legitimacy.

Following Vietnam, low intensity conflict doctrine went through a period of neglect as the military Services rebuilt themselves to deter the Soviet conventional threat in Europe. From a US Army perspective, I would point to 1982 as the time when serious and systematic development of low intensity conflict doctrine began. From an Air Force perspective, revitalization of the special operations contribution to low intensity conflict began with the failed Iranian rescue attempt. That, combined with US involvement in Grenada, suggested there was more to low intensity conflict than counterinsurgency, and that all the branches and arms were concerned with low intensity conflict, not just the special operations forces.



The Army-Air Force Center for Low intensity Conflict in which I work was formed by the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force in 1986 to serve as a service focal point for low intensity conflict. At approximately the same time, government attention in this area became more intense. Let me share with you some of the government actions and publications over the past three years and their relevance to low intensity conflict.



## **LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT**

NOV 1985

**A LIMITED POLITICO-MILITARY STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, OR PSYCHOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES. IT IS OFTEN PROTRACTED AND RANGES FROM DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC, OR PSYCHOSOCIAL PRESSURES THROUGH TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY. LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT IS GENERALLY CONFINED TO A GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND IS OFTEN CHARACTERIZED BY CONSTRAINTS ON THE WEAPONRY, TACTICS, AND THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE.**

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In November 1985, the Joint Chiefs of Staff adopted the first joint definition for low intensity conflict. Here is that definition. This definition was almost two years in staffing. The problem with definitions is, if people do not like them, they will use another term.

Limited military operations  
 Concealed aggression    Internal or subterranean war  
 Lower level warfare/conflict    War against lesser adversaries  
 Revolutionary warfare    Insurgency/counterinsurgency  
 Aggressive containment  
 Unconventional warfare    Wars of national liberation  
 Restricted engagement    Countersubversive warfare  
 Irregular political warfare    Marginal military operations  
 Anti-imperialist warfare    Revolutionary guerrilla warfare  
 Anti-bandit campaigns  
 Constrained operations  
 Remote area conflict  
 Low intensity conflict  
 Transnational Conflict  
 Conflict short of war  
 Attenuated conflict  
 Strategic oblique  
 Subversive warfare  
 Guerrilla warfare  
 Modern warfare  
 Internal conflict  
 Protracted war  
 Peripheral war  
 Ambiguous war  
 Sublimated wars  
 Violent peace  
 Surrogate war  
 Peoples war  
 Indirect war  
 Armed peace  
 Special War  
 Shadow war  
 Small wars  
 Cover war  
 Dark Wars  
 FID/IDAO

## LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

### A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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In fact, we have collected almost 50 terms which, in concept, closely resemble all or part of low intensity conflict -- my favorite is subterranean warfare.

NOV 1986

## **THE COHEN-NUNN AMENDMENT TO THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1987**

### **ESTABLISHED:**

- **A BOARD FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT WITHIN THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL**
- **A UNIFIED COMBATANT COMMAND FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS**
- **AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

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In November 1986, Congressional interest in low intensity conflict was reflected in the Cohen-Nunn Amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1987. It mandated an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, a unified combatant command for special operations forces, and a board for low intensity conflict within the National Security Council. Additionally, Congress suggested the President designate within the executive office of the President, a Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs for Low Intensity Conflict. To date, that suggestion has not been acted upon.

# **1987 NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE U.S.**



## **SPECIFICALLY, LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT CAN LEAD TO:**

- **INTERRUPTION OF WESTERN ACCESS TO VITAL RESOURCES.**
- **GRADUAL LOSS OF U.S. MILITARY BASING AND ACCESS RIGHTS.**
- **EXPANDED THREATS TO KEY SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS.**
- **GRADUAL SHIFTING OF ALLIES AND TRADING PARTNERS AWAY FROM THE UNITED STATES INTO POSITIONS OF ACCOMMODATION WITH HOSTILE INTERESTS.**
- **EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOVIET POLITICAL AND MILITARY GAINS.**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

January 1987 saw the first National Security Strategy of the United States distributed. This paper, signed by the President, included policy and strategy statements on low intensity conflict. It suggested reversals in the low intensity conflict area can gradually isolate the US, its allies, and major trading partners from the Third World and from each other. This isolation can be manifested in economic, political, and military terms. Specific examples are shown here.

## **LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

**POLITICAL-MILITARY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN  
CONTENDING STATES OR GROUPS BELOW CONVENTIONAL  
WAR AND ABOVE THE ROUTINE, PEACEFUL COMPETITION  
AMONG STATES. IT FREQUENTLY INVOLVES PROTRACTED  
STRUGGLES OF COMPETING PRINCIPLES AND IDEOLOGIES.  
LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT RANGES FROM SUBVERSION TO  
THE USE OF ARMED FORCE. IT IS WAGED BY A  
COMBINATION OF MEANS EMPLOYING POLITICAL, ECONOMIC,  
INFORMATIONAL, AND MILITARY INSTRUMENTS. LOW  
INTENSITY CONFLICTS ARE OFTEN LOCALIZED, GENERALLY  
IN THE THIRD WORLD, BUT CONTAIN REGIONAL AND  
GLOBAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS.**

**JMTGM-44-88, 22 APR 88**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

It also included a new definition for low intensity conflict as depicted here. That document went on to point out that an effective US response to this form of warfare requires the national will to sustain long-term commitments. This new definition of LIC was also adopted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

## **U.S. POLICY FOR DEALING WITH LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

**WHEN IT IS IN U.S. INTEREST TO DO SO, THE UNITED STATES WILL:**

- **IN COORDINATION WITH FRIENDS AND ALLIES, TAKE MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN FRIENDLY NATIONS FACING INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL THREATS.**
- **EMPLOY THE FULL RANGE OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, INFORMATIONAL AND MILITARY INSTRUMENTS OF POWER.**
- **WORK TO AMELIORATE THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF INSTABILITY AND CONFLICT IN THE THIRD WORLD BEFORE IT LEADS TO VIOLENCE.**
- **PURSUE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, TRADE, AND INVESTMENT PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORDERS.**
- **SUPPORT SELECTED RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS ACTING IN OPPOSITION TO REGIMES WORKING AGAINST U.S. INTERESTS.**
- **TAKE STEPS TO DISCOURAGE SOVIET AND OTHER STATE-SPONSORED ADVENTURISM, AND INCREASE THE COSTS TO THOSE WHO USE PROXIES OR TERRORIST AND SUBVERSIVE FORCES TO EXPLOIT INSTABILITY IN THE THIRD WORLD.**

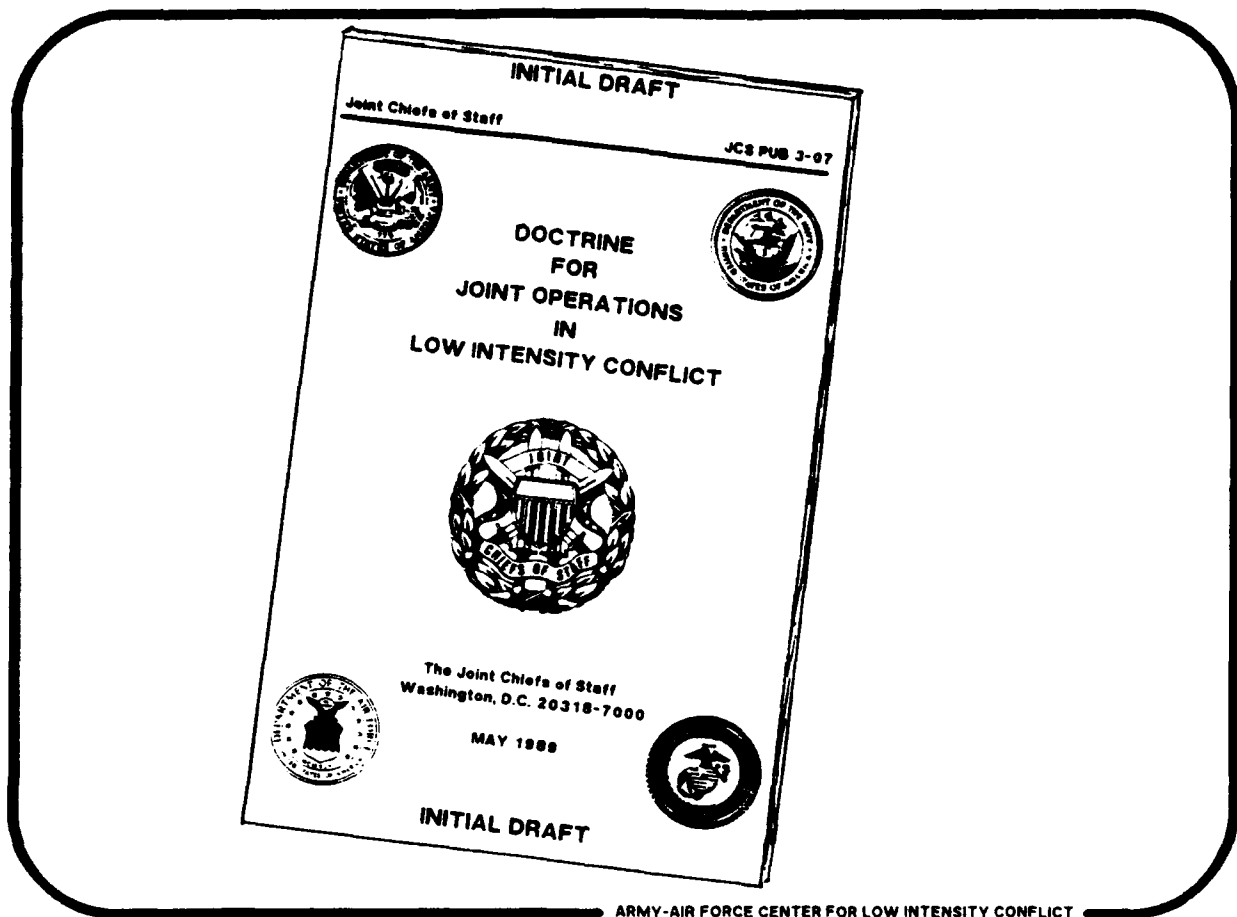
**1987 NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE U.S.**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

United States policy for dealing with low intensity conflict situations may be summarized as shown on this slide. The low intensity conflict strategies that support this policy must coordinate the use of a variety of policy instruments among both US Government and international agencies. Responses may draw on economic, political, and informational tools, as well as military assistance.

In fact many of you may be surprised to realize that the principal military element in combatting low intensity conflict is security assistance. This is because the fundamental tenet of US strategy for dealing with low intensity conflict directed against our friends and allies is that military institutions in threatened states must become able to provide security for their own citizens and governments. That means indirect--rather than direct--applications of US military power are the most appropriate and effective ways to achieve national goals.

June 1987 saw the signing of a National Security Decision by President Reagan. Entitled National Policy and Strategy for Low Intensity Conflict, it substantially reiterated the above points.



ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

Recognizing the need for joint low intensity conflict doctrine, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the development of JCS Publication 3-07 in December 1987. The US Army is the office of primary responsibility and the Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict is responsible for its development. An initial draft has been completed and disseminated for review.

**THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO CONGRESS  
ON U.S. CAPABILITIES TO ENGAGE IN  
LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT AND  
CONDUCT SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

DEC 1987

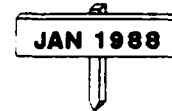
- BECAUSE OF SUCCESS IN DETERRING NUCLEAR AND LARGE-SCALE CONVENTIONAL WAR LIC REMAINS A SERIOUS THREAT AND WILL CONTINUE TO THREATEN OUR INTERESTS IN THE YEARS AHEAD.
- BECAUSE NUMEROUS GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS ARE INVOLVED IN APPLYING ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, INFORMATIONAL AND MILITARY INSTRUMENTS, COORDINATION MUST BE EXTENSIVE AND MAY BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE.
- CONFUSION SURROUNDS THE SEMANTICS OF LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT AND HAS COMPLICATED DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE POLICY TO DEAL WITH IT.

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

As required by the Cohen-Nunn Amendment, the President's report to Congress on "US Capabilities to Engage in Low Intensity Conflict and Conduct Special Operations" was also submitted in December 1987. The unclassified points are shown on the slide.



## **1988 NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE U.S.**

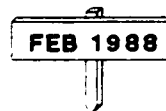


- **DISCUSSED LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT AS AN INTEGRATED ELEMENT OF NATIONAL POWER WITHIN OUR NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY.**
- **PLACED MORE EMPHASIS ON HELPING FRIENDS AND ALLIES TO HELP THEMSELVES.**
- **REFINED STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT.**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

In January 1988, the second National Security Strategy of the United States was released. It showed a significant evolution of thought regarding low intensity conflict. In the 1987 version, low intensity conflict was discussed as a portion of US defense policy, but in the 1988 version it became an integrated element of national power within our national security strategy. Additionally, in the 1988 version, strategies for dealing with low intensity conflict were refined and more emphasis placed on helping friends and allies to help themselves.

# **SECRETARY OF DEFENSE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS FOR 1989**



**AMPLIFIED DISCUSSION ON LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT AND  
ADDRESSED IT IN TERMS OF FOUR MISSION CATEGORIES:**

- **INSURGENCY/COUNTERINSURGENCY**
- **COUNTER TERRORISM (COMBATTING TERRORISM)**
- **PEACEKEEPING**
- **PEACETIME CONTINGENCIES**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

Several of the past editions of the Secretary of Defense's Annual Report to Congress have discussed low intensity conflict. However, the report for Fiscal Year 1989 amplified the discussion and addressed it in terms of four mission categories: insurgency/counterinsurgency, peacetime contingency operations, peacekeeping operations, and counterterrorism, which provide a framework for research and analysis of the low intensity conflict phenomenon. With the exception of counterterrorism, which we refer to as combatting terrorism, these categories are consistent with those in the draft Army-Air Force manual on low intensity conflict doctrine, which is awaiting signature by the Service chiefs, as well as the draft JCS publication previously mentioned. Let me now take a few minutes to talk about these categories.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **INSURGENCY**

**AN ORGANIZED MOVEMENT AIMED AT THE OVERTHROW  
OF A CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE USE  
OF SUBVERSION AND ARMED CONFLICT.**

**JCS PUB 1-02**

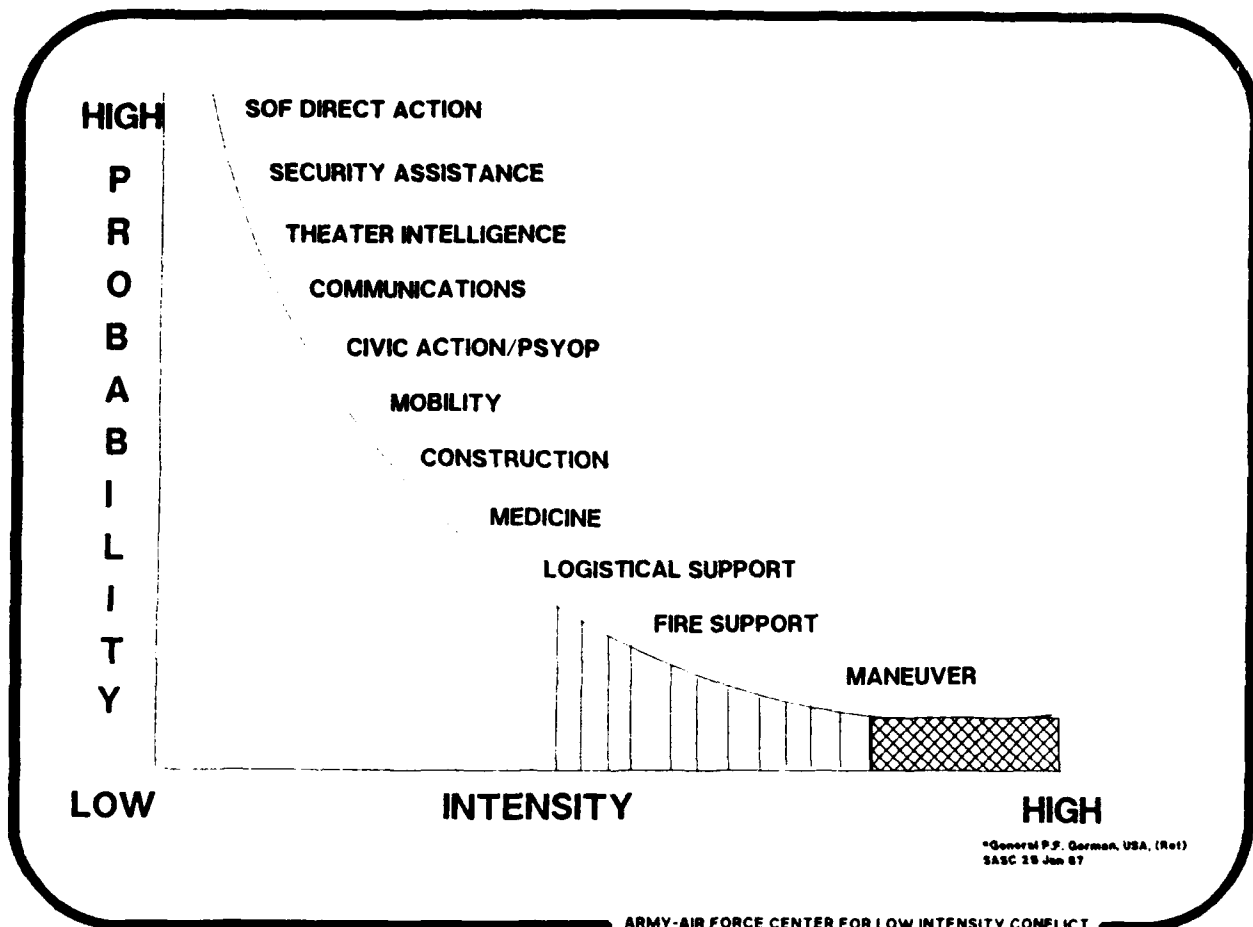
### **COUNTERINSURGENCY**

**THOSE MILITARY, PARAMILITARY, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC,  
PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND CIVIC ACTIONS TAKEN BY A  
GOVERNMENT TO DEFEAT INSURGENCY.**

**JCS PUB 1-02**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

The JCS definitions for insurgency and counterinsurgency are shown here. The insurgent's goal is the development of a long-term political-military program, using protracted warfare to subvert and overpower governments. Cambodia, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Vietnam clearly illustrate the fate of societies that succumb to communist insurgents. Now El Salvador and the Philippines face similar threats.



In responding to these threats, our role is not to shoulder the burden ourselves, but to assist others in defending themselves. To accomplish this, we must train host nation forces in the technical skills needed to accomplish their mission. Additionally, we must work with the leadership of these countries to help them along the road to a competent and just civilian government. Examples of assistance are shown here. The goal is to ensure that host nations' military forces are well-trained, professional, and able to support the broad political-military programs essential to defeating insurgent movements. Thus, providing a shield behind which educators, doctors, and civil servants can carry out essential reforms.

I have previously mentioned the importance of security assistance in low intensity conflict. While it is our most potent instrument, security assistance is not to be viewed as the indiscriminate sale and transfer of arms to others. Rather, it is a means to assist our friends or allies in providing the internal security essential to the growth of democratic institutions.

## **INSURGENCY**

***"WE SEEK TO GIVE EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO RESIST MARXIST-LENINIST DICTATORSHIPS SO THEY CAN STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM. SUPPORT TO RESISTANCE FORCES DOES NOT UNDERMINE OUR COMMITMENT TO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS. ON THE CONTRARY, STRONG RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS CAN ONLY INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF BRINGING COMMUNIST RULERS TO THE BARGAINING TABLE."***

**PRESIDENT REAGAN  
23 JUN 86**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

Our support is not only valuable to those nations which we believe are essential to preserving the common defense, but it also applies to various groups struggling against communist domination. Our support in the struggle for freedom and the safeguarding of democracy must also extend to those who have seen their countries subverted or conquered by totalitarianism. Our past support to groups such as the Nicaraguan resistance and the Afghan Mujahideen have brought these and other similar groups closer to a true and lasting democracy while permitting the US to be a kinder and gentler America.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **COMBATting TERRORISM**

**ACTIONS, INCLUDING ANTITERRORISM (DEFENSIVE MEASURES TAKEN TO REDUCE VULNERABILITY TO TERRORIST ACTS) AND COUNTERTERRORISM (OFFENSIVE MEASURES TAKEN TO PREVENT, DETER, AND RESPOND TO TERRORISM) TAKEN TO OPPOSE TERRORISM THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE THREAT SPECTRUM.**

JCS PUB 1-02

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

The growth of international terrorist organizations and the use of terrorism by a number of states as part of their foreign policy has changed the complexion of international relations. The JCS definition of combatting terrorism is shown here. Combatting terrorism includes antiterrorism and counterterrorism actions taken to oppose terrorism across the entire threat spectrum. In meeting this form of conflict, we must develop and sustain our intelligence capabilities to penetrate and expose terrorist plots; work to bring terrorists to justice; persuade their supporters to cease their support; preempt their attacks; and maintain the ability to defend successfully against those terrorist attacks that do occur.

## **U.S. POLICY ON TERRORISM**

- **THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS OPPOSED TO DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND IS PREPARED TO ... RESPOND TO TERRORIST ACTS.**
- **STATES THAT PRACTICE TERRORISM OR ACTIVELY SUPPORT IT WILL NOT DO SO WITHOUT CONSEQUENCES ... THE UNITED STATES WILL TAKE MEASURES TO PROTECT ITS CITIZENS, PROPERTY, AND INTERESTS.**
- **THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE NO CONCESSIONS TO TERRORISTS ... THE UNITED STATES WILL USE EVERY AVAILABLE RESOURCE TO GAIN SAFE RETURN OF AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO ARE HELD HOSTAGE ...**
- **THE UNITED STATES WILL ACT ... AGAINST TERRORISTS WITHOUT SURRENDERING BASIC FREEDOMS OR ENDANGERING DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES ....**

PUBLIC REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S  
TASK FORCE ON COMBATING TERRORISM  
FEB 86

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

The US policy concerning terrorism is shown on this slide. By developing special operations forces to respond to specific situations and by enhancing the training and capabilities of our general purpose forces, we have made substantial progress to counter the terrorist threat. Significant progress has also been made in securing the cooperation of friendly nations, where the timely exchange of information has made possible the preemption of some terrorist attacks and the apprehension of several key terrorist figures. While we may never eliminate terrorism entirely, we are working to create an environment that makes it far more difficult for terrorists to achieve success. This can be accomplished with an effective antiterrorism program. But, as evidenced by the terrorist involvement in Pan American Flight 103, much remains to be done.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **PEACEKEEPING**

**EFFORTS TAKEN WITH THE CONSENT OF THE CIVIL OR MILITARY AUTHORITIES OF THE BELLIGERENT PARTIES TO A CONFLICT TO MAINTAIN A NEGOTIATED TRUCE IN SUPPORT OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN PEACE.**

**JCS PUB 3-07 PROPOSED**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

Our military strength and our policy of deterrence have helped to prevent a major international war. Through successful diplomatic efforts several war-torn areas have seen the arrival of peace. As part of our commitment to international peace, the United States has employed its forces in peacekeeping efforts designed to separate belligerents and give them the time and the opportunity they need to resolve their differences. A working definition for peacekeeping is shown here.



## **PEACETIME CONTINGENCY ROLES**

- **DISASTER RELIEF**
- **SHOWS OF FORCE**
- **NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATIONS**
- **RESCUE AND RECOVERY**
- **STRIKES AND RAIDS**
- **PROTECTION OF SEA LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS**
- **PEACEMAKING**
- **SECURITY ASSISTANCE SURGES**
- **SUPPORT TO U.S. CIVIL AUTHORITIES**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

As Grenada clearly demonstrated, the Soviets and their clients are willing to use subversion to expand their influence. Other states, Iran and Libya for example, also employ indirect or direct aggression and sponsor terrorist attacks on US citizens to gain their ends. We must be able to counter these and similar threats when they arise. Another example is the recent efforts in the Persian Gulf which demonstrate our resolve to defend our interests and to provide support to our friends and allies.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **PEACETIME CONTINGENCIES**

**NORMALLY, THE SHORT-TERM, RAPID PROJECTION OR EMPLOYMENT OF MILITARY FORCES IN CONDITIONS SHORT OF WAR. SUCH EMPLOYMENT CAN ALSO REQUIRE A LARGE, HIGHLY VISIBLE BUILDUP OF US MILITARY FORCES OVER EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME.**

**JCS PUB 3-07 PROPOSED**

**ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

While no formal definition for peacetime contingencies currently exists, we have developed the following working definition. Peacetime contingencies require a range of capabilities, from special operations to general purpose forces, equipped and trained to respond immediately and decisively when called upon.

## **MILITARY SUPPORT TO COUNTERDRUG OPERATIONS FOR FY 1987**

- **OVER 17,000 HOURS OF AERIAL SURVEILLANCE**
- **2,512 SHIP DAYS WITH COAST GUARD LAW ENFORCEMENT DETACHMENTS (LEDETS) EMBARKED**
- **FURNISHED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES MOBILE RADAR AND GROUND SENSOR SUPPORT**
- **PROVIDED EXPERT ADVICE ON PROCUREMENT AND ARCHITECTURE OF COMMAND, CONTROL COMMUNICATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE**

**Secretary of Defense  
Report to Congress  
FY 1989**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

One area where the magnitude and type of military involvement is fairly "new ground" is support to civil authorities. An example of this is counterdrug operations. Based upon recent Congressional action, DOD's involvement in counterdrug operations continues to expand. Drug abuse and drug trafficking seriously undermine the fabric of society. This slide shows the magnitude of DOD involvement in the "war-on-drugs" for 1987. However, if Congressional hearings are an indication of the future, we can expect this area to expand in the future.

## **IMPERATIVES FOR SUCCESS IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

**PRIMACY OF POLITICS**

**UNITY OF EFFORT**

**ADAPTABILITY**

**LEGITIMACY OF OUR INTEREST/EFFORTS**

**PATIENCE**

**"Supporting U.S. Strategy for  
Third World Conflict", JUN 1988  
Commission on Integrated Long-  
Term Strategy**

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

Numerous studies have been completed over the past few years looking at low intensity conflict. Some have been commissions formed to review US actions following an incident such as the hostage rescue attempt in Iran or the bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon. Other groups reviewed a region to see how best to employ US resources over the long-term. One of the more relevant to low intensity conflict is the report released last year called Discriminate Deterrence. This study by the Bipartisan Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy included a working group on regional conflict. This group, chaired by General Paul Gorman, US Army retired, and past Commander-in-Chief of US Southern Command, had numerous relevant findings and recommendations on low intensity conflict. Time does not permit a complete review of their work, but I would like to share with you some principles, or imperatives, which we at the Army-Air Force Center for Low intensity Conflict helped formulate and are included therein. Here are those low intensity conflict imperatives.

Low intensity conflict manifests itself in a political context, regardless of the root causes. The reality of low intensity conflict requires an integrated national policy and strategy. Policies, doctrine, and force structure must be adapted to the nature and needs of the country or region. In nearly every situation, the legitimacy of a given group within a society is being challenged. United States involvement must consider that legitimacy and realize it may be impacted because of US involvement. Finally, low intensity conflict is a protracted affair. Our actions must be founded on long-term objectives. It is often better to forego opportunities for immediate, demonstrative, tactical success to secure larger aims.

## CONCERNS

- RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION
- THE USE OF MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION BY ADVERSARIES
- COMPLEXITY OF LAWS AND LACK OF DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE
- DEVELOPMENT OF A RATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE GROWING DRUG THREAT
- NEED FOR INTERAGENCY AND INTERBRANCH COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

ARMY-AIR FORCE CENTER FOR LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

The final area I have been asked to address involves some concerns regarding low intensity conflict. I emphasize these are concerns of the Army-Air Force Center for Low intensity Conflict and do not necessarily reflect those shared by the Services, nor the Department of Defense. Additionally, I would point out some efforts are currently underway to address several of these areas.

The first involves recognizing the importance of informational support to diplomatic power in the low intensity conflict area. Public opinion polls consistently find that, depending on the issue, up to two-thirds of Americans take no interest in foreign policy. Only a slight majority believe the US needs to play an active part in world affairs. There is no predisposed domestic constituency for America's foreign policy -- we must build one. Conferences such as this one address this specific point, but more must be done. We must go back and tell others about the challenges of low intensity conflict.

That is not to say that some individuals and organizations have not discovered and developed the power of information. This brings me to the second concern. The use of disinformation and

misinformation in the pursuit of ideas which may be considered detrimental to the interests of this country. Those who would have you believe that low intensity conflict is a war against the poor are misinformed. Often it is uncertain whether these people and organizations are serving as "useful idiots" or truly wish to see the demise of this great nation. Especially disconcerting are those radical religious movements which attempt to blend religious dogma with Marxist theory to assist insurgent groups in the overthrow of existing governments. Often under the rubric of "liberation theology", it posits that the poor, long victimized by the rich, must translate religious teaching into action, sometimes violent action, in order to change the social system and bring their so called "justice" to the world.

The lack of a domestic constituency within our country for our Third World friends and allies has helped to create another concern. It is the lack of low intensity conflict focus in our security assistance program. Although the principal weapon for combatting low intensity conflict is security assistance, the funding for this important tool during the second half of the 1980s has been clearly downward. Aggravating these cuts, Congress earmarked roughly 85 percent of all military assistance funds for five countries -- Egypt, Greece, Israel, Pakistan, and Turkey, thereby causing drastic cuts for many countries and, for others, no funding at all. When we deny the requests for assistance from friends and allies, we risk eroding incentives to cooperate with us, and we risk losing access and influence as they turn to others, including the Soviet Union and its allies, for equipment and support. But availability of funds is only a portion of the concern. The myriad of complex rules and regulations combined with a high level of micro-management has, in some instances, seriously impacted the effectiveness of security assistance. These include rules and regulations which require the burning of US tents rather than giving them to our friends or allies, or the sealing of water wells with concrete at the completion of a US overseas military exercise.

Recent legislation has earmarked security assistance funds for certain countries involved in counter-drug operations. Drug trafficking is in the hands of well-armed gangs and insurgents, sometimes working together as in Peru. The drugs are produced and refined mainly in areas outside the control of the central governments. How the US proceeds, in concert with our friends and allies, against these new pirates of the Twentieth Century will have serious implications to our national security in the years ahead. We believe it is important to develop a rational response against both supply and demand. While it may be possible for military resources to have a greater role in the counterdrug effort, it must be developed within the context of our constitution and balanced with our forces' capability to maintain appropriate readiness against more traditional threats to our national security.

Virtually all these concerns have one common thread. For this government to effectively address these problems requires interagency and interbranch cooperation. The Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, and the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 1989 gave clear evidence of strong bipartisan Congressional concern that methods for interagency coordination and integration of low intensity conflict operations be formulated. This must be done if our efforts to meet future low intensity conflict challenges are to have lasting value.